

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1-3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) A garment comprising an absorbent part and a waist belt which has a longitudinal direction and a cross-direction and which is attached directly or indirectly to said garment, wherein said belt includes two belt-portions which extend generally in said longitudinal direction in respective directions from said absorbent part and which are intended to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belt has a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belt, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction that essentially coincides with the length of the belt, wherein a part of the belt being located centrally between the two belt-portions has one and the same degree of stiffness throughout the whole of its area.

5. (previously presented) A garment comprising an absorbent part and a waist belt which has a longitudinal direction and a cross-direction and which is attached directly or indirectly to said garment, wherein said belt includes two belt-portions which extend generally in said longitudinal direction in respective directions from said absorbent part and which are intended to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belt has a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belt, wherein the stiffness that varies has an

extension in the longitudinal direction that essentially coincides with the length of the belt, wherein the two belt-portions of said belt are comprised of a generally homogenous material; and a cross-section through one or both of said belt-portions taken in the cross-direction presents at least one longitudinally extending edge-part that is thinner than a central part of said cross-section.

6. (previously presented) A garment comprising an absorbent part and a waist belt which has a longitudinal direction and a cross-direction and which is attached directly or indirectly to said garment, wherein said belt includes two belt-portions which extend generally in said longitudinal direction in respective directions from said absorbent part and which are intended to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belt has a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belt, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction that essentially coincides with the length of the belt, wherein at least one longitudinally extending edge-part of the belt has been treated so as to change the stiffness of the material locally.

7. (previously presented) A garment according to claim 6, wherein the at least one edge-part of said belt has been heat-treated.

8. (previously presented) A garment according to claim 6, wherein the at least one edge-part of said belt has been treated with electromagnetic radiation.

9. (previously presented) A garment according to claim 6, wherein the at least one edge-part of said belt has been worked mechanically.

10. (Previously Presented) A garment comprising an absorbent part and two separate belts which have a longitudinal direction, a cross-direction, longitudinally extending edge parts and a longitudinally extending interior part that is arranged between the longitudinally extending edge parts, wherein said belts extend generally in said longitudinal direction, one end of each of the two separate belts is permanently fastened directly or indirectly to the absorbent part, and opposite ends of each of the two separate belts extend in respective directions from said absorbent part and are adapted to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belts have a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belts, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction, and wherein a thickness of each of the cross-sectional areas at the longitudinally extending edge-parts of the belts is smaller than at the longitudinally extending interior part thereof.

11. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 10, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension that essentially coincides with the length of the belts.

12. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 10, wherein the belts fasten with releasable fasteners.

13. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 10, wherein one end of the absorbent part is elastic.

14. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 10, wherein the thickness of the interior part is substantially uniform.

15. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 14, wherein a width of the interior part is greater than a width of each of the longitudinally extending edge parts.

16. (Previously Presented) A garment comprising an absorbent part and two separate belts which have a longitudinal direction, a cross-direction, longitudinally extending edge parts and a longitudinally extending interior part that is arranged between the longitudinally extending edge parts, wherein said belts extend generally in said longitudinal direction, one end of each of the two separate belts is permanently fastened directly or indirectly to the absorbent part, and opposite ends of each of the two separate belts extend in respective directions from said absorbent part and are adapted to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belts have a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belts, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction, and wherein the stiffness at the edge-parts of the belts is less than at the interior part thereof.

17. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 16, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension that essentially coincides with the length of the belts.

18. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 16, wherein the belts fasten with releasable fasteners.

19. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 16, wherein one end of the absorbent part is elastic.

20. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 16, wherein a width of the interior part is greater than a width of each of the longitudinally extending edge parts.

21. (Currently Amended) A garment comprising an absorbent part and two separate waist belts which have a longitudinal direction, a cross-direction, longitudinally extending edge parts and a longitudinally extending interior part that is arranged between the longitudinally extending edge parts,

wherein said belts extend generally in said longitudinal direction, one end of each of the two separate belts is permanently fastened directly or indirectly to the absorbent part, and opposite ends of each of the two separate belts extend in respective directions from said absorbent part and are adapted to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belts have a stiffening material that forms a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belts,

wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction, and

~~wherein a piece at an end of at least one of the belts is free from stiffening material~~

the interior part of the belts in a cross section taken in the cross-direction has a substantially uniform thickness, the substantially uniform thickness continuously decreasing from the interior part to each of the edge parts in the cross section and the stiffness of the belts continuously decreasing from the interior part to each of the edge parts in the cross section.

22. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 21, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension that essentially coincides with the length of the belts.

23. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 21, wherein the belts fasten with releasable fasteners.

24. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 21, wherein one end of the absorbent part is elastic.

25. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 21, wherein a piece at an end of both of the belts is free from stiffening material.

26. (Previously Presented) A garment comprising an absorbent part and two separate belts which have a longitudinal direction, a cross-direction, longitudinally extending edge parts and a longitudinally extending interior part that is arranged between the longitudinally extending edge parts, wherein said belts extend generally in said longitudinal direction, one end of each of the two separate belts is permanently fastened directly or indirectly to the

absorbent part, and opposite ends of each of the two separate belts extend in respective directions from said absorbent part and are adapted to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which belts have a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the belts, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction, and wherein the longitudinally extending edge parts are adjacent the central part, the stiffness at the edge-parts of the belts is less than at the interior part thereof, and the stiffness of the interior part is substantially uniform along a cross-direction.

27. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 26, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension that essentially coincides with the length of the belts.

28. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 26, wherein the belts fasten with releasable fasteners.

29. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 26, wherein one end of the absorbent part is elastic.

30. (Previously Presented) The garment of claim 26, the stiffness of the interior part is substantially uniform along the longitudinal direction.

31. (New) The garment of claim 21, wherein a piece at an end of at least one of the belts is free from stiffening material.

32. (New) The garment according to claim 21, wherein the cross section of the belts has substantially homogeneous construction of the stiffening material.

33. (New) The garment according to claim 21, wherein the interior part has a substantially uniform stiffness in the cross section.